

What is Claimed is:

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1. A medical information management system comprising:
 - an information management center adapted to receive and manage medical information associated with a patient;
 - a patient appliance having an input/output device, a processor, and a memory, wherein a patient interacts with the patient appliance, via the input/output device according to a patient tailored presentation that is generated by the processor based on data stored in the memory, to provide medical information to the patient appliance, review information stored in the patient appliance, or both;
 - means for selectively establishing a first communication link between the information management center and a patient appliance assigned to a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center for communicating data from the patient appliance to the information management center or from the information management center to the patient appliance;
 - means for selectively establishing a second communication link between the information management center and a healthcare professional terminal of a healthcare professional supervising a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center, wherein interaction between the healthcare professional terminal and the information management center via the second communication link is governed by a healthcare professional-management center protocol so that a healthcare professional interacting with the information management center via the healthcare

professional terminal is provided with a healthcare professional tailored presentation different from the patient tailored presentation; and

means for selectively establishing a third communication link between the information management center and a third party terminal of a third party authorized by a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center to allow such a third-party access to at least a portion of the medical information associated with such a patient for reviewing same, wherein interaction between such a third party terminal and the information management center via the third communication link is governed by a third party-management center protocol, so that a third party interacting with the information management center via the third party terminal to review the medical information associated with a patient is provided with a third-party tailored presentation different from the patient tailored presentation and different from the healthcare professional tailored presentation.

2. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the first communication link, the second communication link, or the third communication link is an internet based communication link, a telephone based communication link, a LAN communication link, or a WAN communication link.

3. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the information management center includes:

means for periodically receiving patient information provided by the patient appliance via the first communication link;

means for processing the periodically received patient information; and

means for automatically providing a notification to at least one of a patient, a healthcare professional, and a third party responsive to one of 1) a patient failing to provide the patient information, and 2) the patient information falling outside a predetermined threshold.

4. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the information management center includes:

means for preparing a summary of the medical information managed by the information management center; and

means for providing the summary to at least one of 1) a patient via the first communication link, 2) a healthcare professional via the second communication link, and 3) an authorized third party via the third communication link.

5. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the information management center includes means for providing reminders to at least one of a patient, a healthcare professional, and an authorized third party instructing a patient to at least one of 1) comply with a prescribed therapy or treatment, and 2) perform a monitoring function.

6. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the information management center includes a database adapted to store at least one 1) general medical information not specific to the medical information associated with a patient and 2) location information indicating where such general medication information is located, and wherein at least one of a patient and a third party can access at least one of the general medical information and the location information via the first communication link and the second communication link, respectively.

7. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the third party tailored presentation, the patient tailored presentation or the healthcare professional party tailored presentation includes a first field in which the patient information is displayed and a second field in which an advertisement is displayed.

8. A medical information system according to claim 1, at least one the means for establishing a first communication link, means for establishing a second communication link, and means for establishing a third communication link includes a voice synthesizing capability so that information can be communicated orally via at least one of the first, second, and third communication links.

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9. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein at least one the means for establishing a first communication link, means for establishing a second communication link, and means for establishing a third communication link also

allows for an associated patient, healthcare professional, and third party to select a communication medium by which information is provided.

10. A medical information system according to claim 1, wherein the patient appliance further comprises means for providing a positive pressure therapy to a patient.

11. A method of managing medical information comprising:
providing an information management center adapted to receive and manage medical information associated with a patient;
providing a patient appliance having an input/output device, a processor, and a memory, so that a patient interacts with the patient appliance, via the input/output device according to a patient tailored presentation that is generated by the processor based on data stored in the memory, to provide medical information to the patient appliance, review information stored in the patient appliance, or both.

selectively establishing a first communication link between the information management center and the patient appliance assigned to a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center for communicating data from the patient appliance to the information management center or from the information management center to the patient appliance;

selectively establishing a second communication link between the information management center and a healthcare professional terminal of a healthcare

professional supervising a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center, wherein interaction between the healthcare professional terminal and the information management center via the second communication link is governed by a healthcare professional-information management center protocol so that a healthcare professional interacting with the information management center via the healthcare professional terminal is provided with a healthcare professional tailored presentation different from the patient tailored presentation; and

selectively establishing a third communication link between the information management center and a third party terminal of a third party authorized by a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center to allow such a third party access to at least a portion of the medical information associated with such a patient for reviewing same, wherein interaction between such a third party terminal and the information management center via the third communication link is governed by a third party-management center protocol so that a third party interacting with the information management center via the third party terminal to review the medical information associated with a patient is provided with a third-party tailored presentation different from the patient tailored presentation and different from the healthcare professional tailored presentation.

12. A method according to claim 11, further comprising:
periodically receiving, at the information management center, patient information via the first communication link;

processing the periodically received patient information; and automatically providing a notification to at least one of a patient, a healthcare professional, and a third party responsive to one of 1) a patient failing to provide the patient information, and 2) the patient information falling outside a predetermined threshold.

13. A method according to claim 11, further comprising:
preparing a summary of the medical information managed by the information management center; and
providing the summary to at least one of 1) a patient via the first communication link, 2) a healthcare professional via the second communication link, and 3) an authorized third party via the third communication link.

14. A method according to claim 11, further comprising providing reminders to at least one of a patient, a healthcare professional, and an authorized third party instructing a patient to one of 1) comply with a prescribed therapy or treatment, and 2) perform a monitoring function.

15. A method according to claim 11, further comprising:
storing at least one 1) general medical information not specific to the medical information associated with a patient and 2) location information indicating where such general medication information is located;

providing a patient access to the general medical information and the location information via the first communication link; and

providing a third party access to the general medical information and the location information via the third communication link.

16. A method according to claim 11, further comprising providing a first field in which the patient information is displayed and a second field in which an advertisement is displayed in the third party tailored presentation, the patient tailored presentation or the healthcare professional party tailored presentation.

17. A method according to claim 11, further comprising providing the information management center with a voice synthesizing capability so that information can be communicated orally via at least one of the first, second, and third communication links.

18. A method according to claim 11, further comprising:

receiving a communication medium instruction from at least one of a patient via the first communication link, a healthcare professional via the second communication link, and a third party via the third communication link; and

communicating information to at least one of a patient, a healthcare professional, and a third party via a communication medium designated by the communication medium instruction.

19. A method according to claim 11, further comprising providing a providing a positive pressure therapy to a patient via the patient appliance.

20. A patient interface appliance comprising:

a housing;

at least one input device associated with the housing for providing input information to the patient interface appliance responsive to a patient manually actuating the input device;

a display provided on the housing;

a processor within the housing and adapted to receive the input information from the input device and to control a presentation of information provided on the display such that the display includes a general information field and an advertisement field;

a memory associated with the processor for storing data including: (1) query display commands to display a plurality of queries pertaining to a patient's medical condition in the general information field presented in a patient survey, (2) the input information entered via the input device in response to a query, and (3) an advertisement display command to display an advertisement in the advertisement field; and

information transferring means associated with the processor and memory for communicating information from the patient interface appliance to a medical information management center.

21. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, further comprising an audio output device operatively coupled to the processor and adapted to generate an audio output based on a signal from the processor.

22. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, further comprising a visual indicator associated with one of the housing and the display and adapted to provide a visual indicator to a user that at least one of the following conditions exist: (1) the patient interface appliance in a stand-by mode, and (2) a message is available for review via the display.

23. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, wherein the display commands include a main page display command to display a main page, which includes a plurality of user selectable options, in the general information field, wherein one of the plurality of user selectable options is a start patient survey option for initiating the patient survey in which the plurality of queries are presented in the general information field and responses to the queries are received via the input device.

24. A patient interface appliance according to claim 23, remaining other of the plurality of user selectable options include at least one of the following:

(1) a contact information display option for displaying contact information in the general information field for contacting at least one of a healthcare professional, a medical service provider, and a medical product provider;

(2) a general medical information display option for displaying general medical information in the general information field; and

(3) a catalog information display for displaying information used to order at least one of a product and service.

25. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, wherein the processor includes means for providing a survey completion reward to a user responsive to completing the patient survey.

26. A patient interface appliance according to claim 25, wherein the survey completion reward includes at least one of: (1) access to an interactive game presented on the display, (2) registration in a prize drawing, and (3) accumulation of a predetermined number of credits that can be applied to the acquisition of a good or service.

27. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, wherein the processor establishes a communication link with the information management center via the communication terminal for at least one of:

(1) downloading to the information management center the input information entered via the input device;

(2) modifying the display commands; and

(3) modifying the advertisement display commands.

28. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, further comprising a medical equipment terminal disposed on the housing and operatively coupled to the processor to allow data to be downloaded to the processor from an external medical device.

29. A patient interface appliance according to claim 20, further comprising a pressure generator adapted to receive a supply of breathing gas and produce a flow of breathing gas at a pressure above ambient atmospheric pressure.

30. A patient interface appliance comprising:
a housing;
inputting means for providing input information to the patient interface appliance from a user;
outputting means, disposed on the housing, and having a display area for providing visual indicia to a user;

processing means for receiving the input information from the inputting means and for controlling the outputting means such that the display includes a general information field and an advertisement field;

storing means for storing data including at least one of: (1) query display commands to display a plurality of queries pertaining to a patient's medical condition in the general information field presented in a patient survey, (2) the input information entered via the inputting means in response to a query, and (3) an advertisement display command to display an advertisement in the advertisement field; and

means for communicating the data stored in the storing means with a medical information management center.

31. A patient interface appliance according to claim 30, further comprising means for generating an audio output based on a signal from the processing means.

32. A patient interface appliance according to claim 30, wherein the storing means also stores a message from an external source to be provided to a user, and further comprising means for notifying a user that the message is available for review.

33. A patient interface appliance according to claim 30, further comprising means for providing a survey completion reward to a user responsive to such a user completing the patient survey.

34. A patient interface appliance according to claim 30, further comprising means for communicating data from an external medical device to the processing means.

35. A patient interface appliance according to claim 30, further comprising pressure generating means for producing a flow of breathing gas at a pressure above ambient atmospheric pressure for delivery to an airway of a patient.

36. A method of monitoring a patient, comprising:

(1) providing a patient interface appliance comprising:

a housing,
at least one input device associated with the housing,
a display disposed on the housing adapted to include a general information field and an advertisement field,
a processor disposed within the housing,
a memory associated with the processor, and
information transferring means, associated with the processor and memory, for communicating information from the patient interface appliance;

(2) storing in the memory:

query display commands to display a plurality of queries pertaining to a patient's medical condition in a general information field of the display in a patient survey;

input information entered via the input device in response to a query, and

an advertisement display command to display an advertisement in an advertisement field of the display;

(3) displaying an advertisement in the advertisement field based on the advertisement display command;

(4) displaying a patient survey comprising a plurality of queries in the general information field based on the query display commands;

(5) receiving input information from the patient via the input device for each query; and

(6) transmitting the input information response to a medical information management center via the information transferring means.

37. A method according to claim 36, wherein transmitting the input information response includes at least one of:

automatically establishing a communication link with the medical information management center responsive to an occurrence of a predetermined event, and

establishing the communication link responsive to a user manually actuating the input device; and transmitting the input information to the medical information management center responsive the communication link being established.

38. A method according to claim 36, further comprising:
establishing a communication link with the medical information management center; and
at least one of (1) modifying the display commands, and (2) modifying the advertisement display commands based on information provided by the information management center.

39. A method according to claim 36, further comprising:
storing in the memory a message from an external source; and
providing one of a visual indication and an audio indication that the message stored in the memory is available for review.

40. A method according to claim 36, further comprising providing a user with a survey completion reward responsive to a such user completing the patient survey.

41. A method according to claim 40, wherein providing such a user with a survey completion reward includes at least one of:

(1) providing access to an interactive game for presentation on the display,
(2) registering such a user in a prize drawing, and
(3) awarding such a user a predetermined number of credits that can be applied to the acquisition of a good or service.

42. A method according to claim 36, further comprising communicating data from an external medical device to the patient interface appliance for transmission to the medical information management center.

43. A method according to claim 36, further comprising generating a flow of breathing gas at a pressure above ambient atmospheric pressure for delivery to an airway of a patient.

44. A patient interface appliance comprising:
a housing;
at least one input device associated with the housing for providing input information to the patient interface appliance responsive to a user manually actuating the input device;
a display provided on the housing;
a processor within the housing and adapted to receive the input information from the input device and to control a presentation of information provided on the display;

a memory associated with the processor for storing data including: (1) query display commands to display a plurality of queries pertaining to a patient's medical condition presented in a patient survey, (2) the input information entered via the input device in response to a query, wherein the processor executes the patient survey, in which a user is prompted to provide a response to a query or to provide requested information, and wherein the processor provides a user with a survey completion reward responsive to a such user completing the patient survey; and

information transferring means associated with the processor and memory for communicating information from the patient interface appliance to a medical information management center.

45. A patient interface appliance according to claim 44, wherein the patient a survey comprises a plurality of queries presented on the display and the survey completion reward is provided only if a response is provided to each of the plurality of queries.

46. A patient interface appliance according to claim 44, wherein the survey completion reward includes at least one of (1) access to an interactive game for presentation on the display, (2) registration in a prize drawing, and (3) accumulation of a predetermined number of credits that can be applied to the acquisition of a good or service.

47. A patient interface appliance according to claim 44, further comprising a pressure generator adapted to receive a supply of breathing gas and produce a flow of breathing gas at a pressure above ambient atmospheric pressure.

48. A patient interface appliance comprising:

a housing;

inputting means for providing input information to the patient interface appliance from a user;

outputting means, disposed on the housing, and having a display area for providing visual indicia to a user;

processing means for (a) receiving the input information from the inputting means, (b) controlling a presentation of information provided on the displaying means such that a main menu is displayed on the displaying means from which a user can chose to execute a patient survey, in which a user is prompted to provide a response to a query or to provide requested information, and (c) providing a user with a survey completion reward responsive to such a user completing the patient survey;

means for storing data including: (1) a query display command to display the query pertaining to a patient's medical condition presented in the patient survey, (2) the input information entered via the input device in response to the query; and

means for communicating the data stored in the storing means with a medical information management center.

49. A patient interface appliance according to claim 48, wherein the processing means displays a plurality of queries in the patient surface and the survey completion reward is provided only if a response is provided to each of the plurality of queries.

50. A patient interface appliance according to claim 48, wherein the survey completion reward includes at least one of (1) access to an interactive game for presentation on the display, (2) registration in a prize drawing, and (3) accumulation of a predetermined number of credits that can be applied to the acquisition of a good or service.

51. A patient interface appliance according to claim 48, further comprising pressure generating means for producing a flow of breathing gas at a pressure above ambient atmospheric pressure for delivery to an airway of a patient.

52. A method of monitoring a patient, comprising:

(1) providing a patient interface appliance comprising:

a housing,

at least one input device associated with the housing,

a display disposed on the housing adapted to include a general

information field and an advertisement field,

a processor disposed within the housing,

a memory associated with the processor, and
information transferring means, associated with the processor and
memory, for communicating information from the patient interface appliance;

(2) storing in the memory:

query display commands to display a plurality of queries pertaining
to a patient's medical condition in a patient survey, and
input information entered via the input device in response to a
query;

(3) displaying a patient survey comprising a plurality of queries in the
general information field based on the query display commands;

(4) receiving input information from the patient via the input device for
each query; and

(5) providing a user with a survey completion reward responsive to
completion of the patient survey.

53. A method according to claim 52, further comprising transmitting the
input information to a medical information management center via the communication
terminal.

54. A method according to claim 52, providing a user with a survey
completion reward includes at least one of (1) providing access to an interactive game for
presentation on the display, (2) registering the user in a prize drawing, and (3)

accumulating a predetermined number of credits that can be applied to the acquisition of a good or service.

55. A method according to claim 52, further comprising generating a flow of breathing gas at a pressure above ambient atmospheric pressure for delivery to an airway of a patient.

56. A method of subsidizing costs associated with compiling and maintaining a medical information management system, comprising:

a) providing a medical information management system comprising:

1) a patient appliance having an input/output device, a processor, and a memory, wherein a patient interacts with the patient appliance via the input/output device according to a patient tailored presentation that is generated by the processor based on data stored in the memory to at least one of 1) provide medical information to the patient appliance and 2) reviewing information stored in the patient appliance;

2) means for selectively establishing a first communication link between the information management center and a patient appliance assigned to a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center for communicating data from the patient appliance to the information management center;

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3) means for selectively establishing a second communication link between the information management center and a third party terminal of a third party authorized by a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center to allow such a third-party access to the medical information associated with such a patient for reviewing same, wherein interaction between the third party terminal and the information management center via the second communication link is governed by a third party-management center protocol so that a third party interacting with the information management center via the third party terminal is provided with a third-party tailored presentation different from the patient tailored presentation and different from the healthcare professional tailored presentation;

b) providing a first advertisement field in the third-party tailored presentation or the patient tailored presentation; and

c) selling use of the first advertisement field for displaying an advertisement therein.

57. A method according to claim 56, further comprising:

d) providing a second advertisement field in the other of the patient tailored presentation and the third-party tailored presentation; and

e) selling use of the second advertisement field for displaying an advertisement therein.

58. A method according to claim 56, wherein the medical information management system comprising further comprises means for selectively establishing a third communication link between the information management center and a healthcare professional terminal of a healthcare professional supervising a patient whose medical information is being managed by the information management center, wherein interaction between the healthcare professional terminal and the information management center via the third communication link is governed by a healthcare professional-management center protocol so that a healthcare professional interacting with the information management center via the healthcare professional terminal is provided with a healthcare professional tailored presentation different from the patient tailored presentation and different from the third-party tailored presentation, and further comprising:

f) providing a third advertisement field in the healthcare professional tailored presentation; and

e) selling use of the third advertisement field for displaying an advertisement therein responsive to the caregiver accessing the medical information management system via the third communication link.